UNITED
NATIONS

A S

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/795
S/1997/111
6 February 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Agenda item 58
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 31 January 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 31 January 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex, which contains a letter dated 30 January 1997 from His Excellency Mr. Taner Etkin, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

97-03596 (E) 070297

/...

ANNEX

Letter dated 31 January 1997 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter dated 30 January 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Taner Etkin, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, in connection with the decision of the Greek Cypriot administration to purchase the S-300 surface-to-air Russian missile system.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

APPENDIX

Letter dated 30 January 1997 from Mr. Taner Etkin addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to refer to a note, dated 13 January 1997, circulated by the Greek Cypriot administration to all permanent missions at Geneva, regarding its decision to purchase the S-300 surface-to-air Russian missile system, and, in view of this potentially destabilizing development, to bring to your attention the following:

At the outset, I would like to stress that the Turkish Cypriot side regards the conclusion of the sales contract between the Greek Cypriot administration and the Russian Federation for the purchase of the S-300 surface-to-air missile system as a highly provocative and unacceptable step which demonstrates the hostile intentions of the Greek Cypriot side. The addition of such sophisticated weaponry into the Greek Cypriot arsenal will inevitably negate all the prospects of reaching a negotiated settlement in the near future. Its deployment will serve to heighten the tension on the island, already exacerbated by violent Greek Cypriot demonstrations during the summer of 1996, and further entrench the crisis of confidence between the two sides. It is clear that the range and capabilities of the system significantly surpass Greek Cypriot defence requirements, and therefore constitute an offensive threat against Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, with a maximum range of 150 km, it has the capability to penetrate the airspace of neighbouring countries (Turkey is only 64 km away), a fact which also refutes the allegation that the missiles are solely for defensive purposes.

The offensive threat engendered by the Greek Cypriot side's purchase of the S-300 missile system has to be viewed in the context of its ongoing massive armament efforts within the framework of the Greek-Greek Cypriot "joint defence doctrine". Since its implementation in 1993, the Greek Cypriot administration, together with Greece, has accelerated the build-up of arms and armed forces in southern Cyprus. It has also paved the way for the construction of air and sea bases in southern Cyprus intended for Greek fighter planes and warships. Current military expenditure in southern Cyprus has exceeded $2 million a day, which in per capita terms is amongst the highest in the world. The introduction of the missile system will add a new and dangerous dimension to the Cyprus question by radically changing the military equation in the region, which subsequently affects the Turkish/Greek balance in the eastern Mediterranean. President Denktaş and President Demirel signed a joint declaration on 20 January 1997 promising a consolidation of political, economic and military ties between their two countries. The joint declaration delivers a clear message to those who harbour hostile intentions against the security of both the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey, and demonstrates the unequivocal determination of Turkey, as a guarantor power, to continue to exercise its rights and obligations to protect the Turkish Cypriots and to preserve the balance and stability in the region.

The Greek Cypriot administration's military policies and armament activities stand in direct contradiction to its rhetoric on "demilitarization".

The fact that this is propaganda devoid of substance is evident from their outright rejection of various attempts to defuse tensions on the island, such as the moratorium proposed by the United States of America on the overflight of Turkish and Greek military aircraft over Cyprus. Following recent discussions in Athens, the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, declared that the "moratorium proposal is dead" (Cyprus Mail, 19 January 1997). Furthermore, with regard to the implementation of proposed United Nations measures aimed at reducing incidents, and subsequently tensions, along the border, the Greek Cypriot leader stated "we cannot proceed with a reduction of military tension alone without seeing any progress on the substance of the Cyprus problem" (Cyprus Mail, 15 January 1997), indicating that he is not prepared to take vital steps to ease the tension on the island.

The signing of the purchase agreement has generated a strong reaction also from the international community. The United States has expressed concern over the negative implications of the deployment of the missiles on the search for an overall political solution. The United States State Department outlined its position on this issue in a statement on 6 January:

> "... [the purchase of the missiles] will complicate efforts to achieve a lasting peace in Cyprus. The [Greek] Cypriot decision introduces a new and destabilizing element on the island and in the region at the very time that the international community is exploring ways to foster political cooperation to significantly advance a settlement ... This new missile system is even more troubling, as it threatens to take the arms buildup on Cyprus to a new and disturbing qualitative level ... we believe the conclusion of this sales contract makes any mediation effort that much more difficult, and it harms the political atmosphere".

The Greek Cypriot side irresponsibly refuses to reassess the purchase, despite its dangerous ramifications. According to the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, "our acquisition of the missiles is not negotiable".

The sale of arms to the Greek Cypriot administration by the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, is also in direct contravention of numerous resolutions by the very same body, which call for a halt in the military build-up on the island. The Security Council in its resolution 1092 (1996) of 23 December 1996, reiterated its grave concern about the excessive levels of military forces and armaments in south Cyprus and the rate at which they are being expanded, upgraded and modernized, including the introduction of sophisticated weaponry. Furthermore, arms sales are also a blatant violation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe 1993 Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers, where it is categorically stated that each participating State has to consider the internal and regional situation in and around the recipient country, in the light of existing tensions or armed conflicts, and is obliged to avoid transfers which would be likely to endanger peace, introduce destabilizing military capabilities into a region or otherwise contribute to regional instability.

Developments in 1996 have had a gravely negative effect on the political atmosphere on the island. This atmosphere will be further poisoned if the Greek Cypriot side fails to reverse its decision to deploy the said missiles. The

clear threat against the security of both the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey posed by the Greek Cypriot acquisition of the S-300 system, and the effect it will have on the military balance between Turkey and Greece, is a serious destabilizing factor for the whole region.

The Turkish Cypriot side has repeatedly issued warnings over the last few years regarding the highly provocative and dangerous arms build-up in the south. Greece and the Greek Cypriot side should realize that tension and provocation augment the intractability of the Cyprus question and therefore impede the chances of achieving a lasting peace in Cyprus. It is therefore incumbent on the United Nations, and other interested third parties and organizations, to exert maximum pressure on the Greek Cypriot side and impress upon them the urgent need to abandon its increasingly hostile and confrontational stance towards the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the Turkish Cypriot side, with a view to reaching a peaceful accommodation.

(Signed) Taner ETKIN
Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Defence